

Don't Forget! Remember!

Joe Slater

This coming Monday is Memorial Day. I'm glad we have a national day to remember those who gave that "last full measure of devotion" for freedom. Let this day be more than staying home from work and grilling burgers. If you haven't attended ceremonies at a nearby cemetery lately, I urge you to do so Monday. We forget all too easily.

God's people have always struggled with forgetfulness. No less than eleven times in Deuteronomy the Lord warned Israel not to forget. Don't forget your deliverance from Egypt. Don't forget the covenant. Don't forget the Lord's commands. Don't forget the consequences of disobedience and rebellion. In short, don't forget God!

At least thirteen times in that same book, He charged Israel to remember. They were to remember the very things He told them elsewhere not to forget. No surprise, right?

We think of the Passover feast as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but the other feast days also promoted remembrance. The Sabbath was, among other things, a remembrance (Deut. 5:15). The piles of stones set up when Israel crossed Jordan memorialized that great event.

Today the Lord's Supper prompts us to remember what Jesus did for us at the cross. And yes, even in the first century some forgot how Jesus had cleansed them from sin (2 Pet. 1:9). However, the Lord's Supper isn't all we should remember. Jesus urged His disciples to remember His words (John 15:20; 16:4). Peter wrote so that his readers would remember (2 Peter 1:12-15); and Jude exhorted his readers to "remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 17).

We confront the same dangers Israel faced. Don't forget! Remember!

Telephone Cords

". . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Remember the days when telephones were connected by a long cord to the wall? I wonder how many times I wrapped that 20' cord around myself and tried walking. It doesn't work well!

Life can become like a telephone cord if we aren't careful. We become entangled with life's activities and ambitions. This happened to King Solomon. As his wealth and fame grew, so did his distractions. Because of this, he lost his affection for God and gave in to his earthly lusts. If we aren't careful, it'll happen to us.

I know of a family who's active in softball, basketball, soccer, etc. Their time is consumed not only by the games and practices, but transportation. Add in the cost of uniforms, etc and I wonder what is left over for God?

Is there anything wrong with sports, etc? No, of course not! Unfortunately, the self-interests become gods, demanding not only the time of the children but the time of the entire family.

With limited hours in the day, where is the time for God? God doesn't magically morph into an intimate, personal relationship without time and effort. Paul tells Timothy to give diligence to show himself approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15).

James tells us we must first draw close to God before God will draw close to us (James 4:8). How will we draw close to God if we don't spend time in His Word? That's how we come to know Him.

God has spoken to people in different ways at different times (Hebrews 1). Today it's through His Word. Jesus gave His all and directed His Spirit to guide the writers so we would know God's will and purpose. Don't become a tangled telephone cord.

--Steve Prine (Turlock, CA)

Faking It!

Not too long ago, I read an article that described the word "fake" as "one of the dictionary's most intriguing words." I found the article to be quite interesting, but it left me scratching my head. How, pray tell, can a word that describes "a counterfeit or a forgery" be intriguing? Personally, I want nothing to do with anything that's fake!

And yet, fake things abound, and the buyer must truly exercise caution. Businesses often mark paper bills to verify authenticity. Bogus e-mails will offer huge amounts of money, requiring a "retainer fee" to be submitted in order to claim the funds. Scammers use phone calls to lure in unsuspecting victims. Even the news media blast their competition with the cry of "fake news." It's no wonder that the late actor Robert Mitchum once said: "Half the people in America are faking it."

And at times, this fake mentality rears its ugly head among believers. The key to righteousness is doing the will of the Lord (Matthew 7:24, the wise man hears and does; he builds on the rock). But some deny Him by their actions. Many who appear to be devout often undergo a drastic transformation when away from the Body. Such behavior is disheartening to believers . . . and to Jesus. In fact, He will someday deal with them in a way they will not expect (Matthew 7:21 - 23).

Don't be a spiritual fake!

--Kenny Westmorland (Celina, TN)